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singularly delightful philosophic writer. Amazing lines and passages both in thought and expression abound. Perhaps it is no mere accident that men like Nietzsche and Goethe are treated more brilliantly than some rather technical philosophers. The author himself is undoubtedly one of the poet-thinkers for whose product, especially when and where it is sincere and unbiased, we have several reasons to be thankful. One reason among others is that he is so keenly critical and occasionally even prophetic.

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PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION. By Bertrand Russell.
London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1916. Pp. 250.
Price, 6s. net.

Mr. Russell has written a great book, and its effect will probably be felt long after the political controversies which the War has aroused have been forgotten. He has set himself, as it seems from the choice of subjects dealt with, to express in unacademic language the most fundamental of the new conclusions which those have been driven to make who care to examine the assumptions upon which social belief and practice now rest. The study of principles naturally leads him first to discover what are the beliefs and passions which support the present social system. His book is therefore in part a psychological analysis of the common social attitude of to-day. And by contrast there appears another attitude not common or powerful at present but obvious and important to any eyes which care to see. This other attitude is perhaps expressed as creativeness: it is at least activity rather than acquiescence and it is that activity upon which Mr. Russell lays most emphasis in his suggestions for reconstruction.

Naturally such a book must be very far-reaching in its criticism and very indefinite in its suggested programmes. We cannot have all wisdom in one volume, and it is fundamental to the understanding of Mr. Russell's argument that we should not seek it there. So that if anyone desires to find "difficulties" against new suggestions or "arguments" for old abuses, he may do so without finding himself hampered by Mr. Russell's reasoning. There is much to be said in favour of the state or of property which Mr. Russell has not said; and his form of Syndicalism or his educational programme needs further explanation. There will be many, who, for reasons perhaps unconnected with the intelli-

gent study of political and social facts, may fear to let themselves be persuaded by writing that is so obviously a departure from the careful commentaries upon Aristotle and the British or American Constitution, which have hitherto done duty as political philosophy. Most clearly one seems to perceive the ghostly form of the Hegelians gathering themselves for flight from this unholy vigour, like a wind dispersing their "higher unities."

The book begins by contrasting the power and importance of calculation with that of "impulse" in social life. Earlier political and social theory is said to have emphasized too much the part played by rational calculation or desire or purpose. The principle of growth is to be recognized as the fundamentally important fact, by reference to which all custom and institutions must be tested. But this "impulse" appears to have two distinguishable forms: it may be creative or productive and it may be possessive. This, it will be remembered, is Plato's theory in the *Sophist* where he distinguishes productiveness from acquisitiveness,—the activity of the artist from that of the "general" or the "vermin-catcher": and Plato recognises that social forms are the results of these two forms of impulse. But Mr. Russell has carried farther and made more applicable to modern circumstances the half-humorous suggestion of Plato. He sees in established institutions too little place for creative impulse. The state, for example, seems to embody the have-and-hold tendency in human life: and the only hope for the survival of individuality Mr. Russell finds in the increase in number and in power of voluntary associations for specific purposes. Such associations would be formed definitely for contest, and not for lamb-like submission. And the impulse which now finds its relief in warfare might then grow to a legitimate and quite vigorous development (p. 97). The analysis of our established property customs follows next, and all the sacred shibboleths of economics and legalism are disturbed by Mr. Russell's criticism. There seems no hope at present for any fundamental change to be adopted calmly before it is compelled by the rising anger of the dispossessed: but Mr. Russell argues well that even Socialists, who are supposed to desire a complete reconstruction of society, "still retain the view that what is of most political importance to a man is his income, and that the principal aim of a democratic politician ought to be to increase the wages of labour" (p. 130). This is probably a mistaken policy. Control of the conditions of life and labour

and an abolition of the whole wage-system seems to be a more excellent purpose for action.

In discussing education, from the political point of view only, Mr. Russell finds himself opposed by the tradition which had its first great exponent in Aristotle, that education should secure the present structure of society. We have clearly come to a time in which education should be a source for changing that structure by giving the delight in mental adventure and freedom from the oppressiveness of authority. Marriage also needs reconsideration, since the free play of personality is not possible within the present economic-political marriage system, which is based upon the authority of one over another. The same is true of the organisation of religion by official priesthoods in churches. "Very little of what is valuable in morals and religion comes nowadays from the men who are eminent in the religious world" (p. 202). The life of the spirit and the life of the mind seem to need a new form of expression, not based upon the exclusiveness and conventionalities of the past: for we can already feel the beginnings of a social insight which will transform the relations between groups of men. The principles which Mr. Russell suggests as basis for immediate action are these: "I. The growth and vitality of individuals is to be promoted as far as possible. II. The growth of one individual or one community is to be as little as possible at the expense of another." Liberty and reverence are the two words for inspiring the new world.

There are a few minor criticisms which may be made. For example, in the theory of marriage no new constructive idea is suggested; but in a book on social reconstruction the emphasis should not be laid on negative criticism. It may be that no new idea is needed; and yet if that is so, it should be stated. Is it simply that we need a modification of the present system? For the treatment of the marriage system in that case should not be put upon the same level as the treatment of property. The marriage system as it stands at present is indeed based upon domination and authority: the husband claims authority over the wife and both claim authority over the children, without any due allowance for growing intelligence. But there seems to be no new conception, which is more than a modification of the existing system, which would revolutionise the relations within the family, and perhaps Mr. Russell means to imply that modifications of the system are enough. The property system on the other hand stands upon a different level: for here the system itself is perverse

and no mere modification of it will give that free play to creative activity which Mr. Russell desires. But if there is a real distinction between the values of these two systems, it should be stated; for one needs only remodelling and the other abolition.

Again with regard to education, Mr. Russell does not seem sufficiently to value the conception of "occupations" (not "trades" as the basis for an educational system. And yet he should recognise that "The education of a gentleman" has been the greatest curse to civilisation. Our other criticisms may be on the mere interpretation of words, but perhaps the difficulty we feel as to the use of certain words by Mr. Russell may be due to a real difference of opinion. He is unfair to "reason," for he seems to identify it with mere calculation; and he is too complimentary to impulse, for he intends by it "creative activity." The mistake of the Utilitarians was not, as Mr. Russell implies, that they valued reasoning too highly, but that they did not understand what reasoning was. They had not read Plato to any purpose. And as for "impulse," the word appears to imply evanescent, transitory, fitful excitability: it is the wrong word to use for a basic conception of social philosophy, unless indeed Mr. Russell can give it new associations. "Energy," with its Aristotelian connections, or even "activity" seems to be safer, if less emotionally coloured. Then again justice appears to be misconceived. Properly used the appeal to "justice" implies by contrast the appeal to "benevolence," and in its revolutionary history it means the emotional appreciation of other men's rights as compared with other men's wrongs. It is a better word even than liberty to overturn the obsolete conception of "charity" and "being kind to the poor" as a reason for social activity.

These are, however, unessential objections to Mr. Russell's thesis. His book remains a turning point in constructive social theory and as such may very well be followed by a more detailed and more extended treatment of the basis upon which a better social world can be built. The trivial and half-hearted tinkering with present evils, which passes usually for "reconstruction," make one impatient for some bold generalisations. Every little gossipeller of compromise is now preparing cheap schemes for rearranging suburban life. But Mr. Russell's mind inhabits a freer air than is common in the suburbs of social and political philosophy.

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